PT 2 of 3 SCS

515

PA - Correspondence Unit

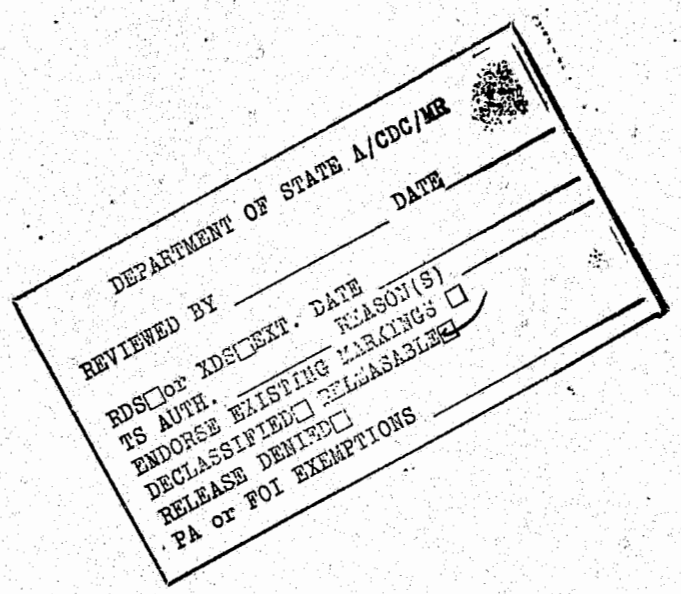
Feb. 28, 1978

CA/SCS - Welfare/Whereabouts Unit

The People's Temple

Attached are three information sheets for use in dealing with correspondence on the People's Temple. Information sheets numbers one and three were cleared by CA, Deputy Assistant Secretary Hennemeyer and Assistant Secretary Watson while information sheet number two was cleared by ARA Special Assistant and Human Rights Officer George Lister.

We trust that these sheets will be useful to you in answering the many queries which have been received on these questions. We do not expect any real change in the case for at least three months so the sheets should be valid for that time.



CA:EAPowers:gjl:wp

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FPI 101-11.6 pt 2 of 3 SCS

TATES GOVERNMENT

iorandum

. Hennemeyer

DATE: February 23, 1978

rancis X. Lambert

c Correspondence: The People's Temple

orrespondence section of Public Affairs has requested
age to use in response to the many letters they have
ved on the custody case of John Victor Stoen, the
e's Temple and the politics of Guyana. All three
cts are inter-related in the volumes of letters SCS,
nd PA have received. PA states that the language
bmit must be cleared at the Deputy Assistant Secretary
.

opose to send PA the three attached information sheets.
mation sheet number one is the standard response we have
using for Congressional inquiries on behalf of
nd Mrs. Stoen. It has been cleared by Miss Watson
mation sheet two is the response drafted by the Guyanese
in reply to queries by Congress alleging USG interference
e internal affairs of Guyana. It was cleared by ARA--
ster. Information sheet three is a new draft providing
mation in general about the People's Temple.

n requested: That you review all three sheets and
de clearance for information sheet three.

ers:mam

S

Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

PT 243 SCS

INFORMATION SHEET NUMBER 1

JOHN VICTOR STOEN CASE

While we in the Department of State sympathize very much with Mr. and Mrs. Stoen in their efforts to regain custody of their son, regrettably there is little we can do to be of assistance. Neither the Department of State nor the courts of the State of California have the authority to enforce a U.S. court decision concerning the custody of John Victor as long as he is physically located outside of the United States. Child custody orders issued in the United States are normally not accepted for enforcement in another country on the basis of comity. While any American custody decision might be given evidentiary weight in the Guyanese proceeding, by no means will it be binding on that court.

Since the initiation of the custody suit in Georgetown, the Department of State and our Embassy in Guyana have been in close contact with the Stoens and their attorneys, both American and Guyanese. The Embassy has attended all court proceedings, when permitted to attend, and has assisted the Stoens in gaining access to Guyanese Government officials. The Embassy has regularly had conversations with the opposing attorneys and has spoken with Mr. Jim Jones, the head of the People's Temple. As Mr. Jones is also an American citizen and entitled to the same rights and protection as Mr. and Mrs. Stoen, the Embassy has been careful to avoid prejudicing the outcome of the dispute. It is the Embassy's responsibility to seek to ensure that the judicial outcome of the dispute results from a fair and impartial determination of the merits of the case, and all of our efforts are so directed.

INFORMATION SHEET NUMBER 2

ALLEGATIONS OF EMBASSY OR USG INTERFERENCE

All the parties to the custody case of John Victor Stoen, currently in the courts in Guyana, are American citizens. The parents of the child are on one side and the People's Temple, a California religious organization which also operates in Guyana, on the other.

Our Ambassador and his staff in Guyana have taken an interest in the case, but have emphasized that the interest of the United States is confined to assuring that the matter is fairly and impartially adjudicated in the courts strictly on its merits and without outside interference from any quarter. Consistent with this position, the Embassy has avoided taking any sides in what is essentially a civil dispute between two groups of Americans. Nor has any pressure been brought by the Embassy on the Government of Guyana or its courts, which have yet to rule on the matter, in favor of one side or the other.

The inquiries made by the American Embassy on behalf of the child's parents were normal protective services which any American citizen abroad could expect to receive from his government. The inquiries were not attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of Guyana and, indeed, have not been interpreted as such.

INFORMATION SHEET NUMBER 3

PEOPLE'S TEMPLE IN GENERAL

As part of the traditional and internationally sanctioned protection services, officers of the American Embassy in Georgetown, Guyana, periodically visit the People's Agricultural Temple located at Jonestown, Guyana. These officers have been free to move about the grounds and speak privately to any individuals, including persons who were believed by their family and friends to be held there against their will. It is the opinion of these officers, reinforced by conversations with local officials who deal with the People's Temple, that it is improbable anyone is being held in bondage. In general, the people appear healthy, adequately fed and housed and satisfied with their lives on what is a large farm. Many do hard, physical labor but there is no evidence of persons being forced to work beyond their capacity or against their will.

Should you have a specific individual about whom you want information, please provide the name of the person and the person's date and place of birth to the Office of Special Consular Services, Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520. During the next visit to the People's Temple by an officer of the American Embassy, that officer will attempt to speak privately with the individual in question, convey your concern and report to you.